

Regular Board of Education Meeting – Approved Minutes
Wednesday, December 6, 2023, 7:00 p.m.
Town Hall Meeting Room

Present Board Members: Liz Barlow, Heather Lombardo, Monica Logan, Donna Nolan, David Peling, Whitney Sanzo, Rosemarie Weber, and Chase Alexander and Katie O’Neill (Student Representatives).

Absent Board Members: N/A

Superintendent Cheri Burke called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

I. Organizational Meeting - Election of Officers

Ms. Burke stated tonight’s meeting will begin with an organizational meeting to elect officers for the Board. Ms. Burke called for nominations for the position of Board Chair. Whitney Sanzo nominated Monica Logan for Board Chair. There were no other nominations for Board Chair. All votes (7-0) were cast for Monica Logan and she was unanimously elected Board Chair.

Ms. Burke handed the meeting over to the new Board Chair, Monica Logan. Ms. Logan called for nominations for the position of Vice Chair. Liz Barlow nominated Heather Lombardo for Vice Chair. There were no other nominations for Vice Chair. All votes (7-0) were cast for Heather Lombardo and she was unanimously elected Vice Chair.

Ms. Logan called for nominations for the position of Secretary. Heather Lombardo nominated Liz Barlow for Secretary. There were no other nominations for Secretary. All votes (7-0) were cast for Liz Barlow for Secretary.

II. Administrative Reports

II.A. Chairman's Corner

Monica Logan, Board Chair, stated she is truly humbled to be entrusted with the position of Board Chair and is grateful for the decades of a strong tradition of civility and cooperation built for our community. She will work closely with fellow Board members and the Superintendent to evaluate what works best for all of our stakeholders but especially our children. All Board members are on the Board of Education to provide the best education our community can offer and set our students up for success now and into the future.

II.B. Superintendent's Report

- Ms. Burke welcomed everyone to the meeting in attendance as well as online and GCTV and extended a special welcome to our newly elected Board members Liz Barlow and Heather Lombardo.
- Ms. Burke thanked former Board Chair, Rosemarie Weber, stating she has been instrumental to her success as a new Superintendent and, most recently, took the lead in teacher negotiations. Ms. Burke stated she is very grateful for all Ms. Weber has done for the students and community of Granby. She also shared that she looks forward to working with newly elected Board Chair Monica Logan.
- The PTO book fair is up and running December 6-8 at Kelly Lane and Wells Road Media Centers.
- Ms. Burke shared that Granby submitted a reading waiver to the state last February and, since that time, met with consultants from the state; however, it was learned this past Friday, December 1st, the CSDE did not approve Granby’s submitted waiver. Ms. Burke stated there is more work to do; however, nothing will change for students in our classrooms. The state is planning a variety of opportunities for superintendents to gather and learn about next steps and options. She shared the decision was based solely on the program choices in our waiver and not on student achievement. There is time to create a plan, gather additional information and make the best decision for Granby students. Unfortunately, a costly unfunded mandate is the result of this decision. Ms. Burke stated she needs to look carefully at the options for our students but also for the financial obligations of the pros and cons. Ms. Burke expressed her gratitude to Jennifer Parsons for her leadership on preparing this waiver. It was a very lengthy document and laborious task. There will be more to come on this in the future.
- The next regularly scheduled Board Meeting will be held on December 20th. A reminder that the FY25 Plus One Budget will be presented at that meeting.

Rosemarie Weber thanked Ms. Burke for her update on the reading waiver and inquired if any districts received approval of the waiver. Ms. Burke stated there is a published list and all districts received word at the same time. Some districts received approval immediately upon submission. She stated another question perhaps to ask is if any other districts who use Teachers College receive a waiver and the answer is no. Jennifer Parsons will provide the Board with a specific update once more information is received. Ms. Weber inquired if this is considered to be a final decision. Ms. Burke stated, yes, the CSDE hired a consulting firm to evaluate and the Commissioner turnkeyed those decisions but did not overturn any decisions. Ms. Weber inquired if there an appeal process to litigate and Ms. Burke shared a meeting with superintendents included legal counsel to advise as to next steps. There are so many more questions than answers and there is interest across the group but Ms. Burke stated she has not yet made a decision in this regard but would need to consult with the Board as well as Jennifer Parsons.

Ms. Burke stated she was reminded that the Board Subcommittee Assignments item on the agenda was skipped. A motion was made by Rosemarie Weber and seconded by Donna Nolan to amend the agenda to announce the subcommittee assignments. This motion passed unanimously at 7:11 p.m.

I.A. Board Chair Subcommittee Assignments

Ms. Logan requested the following Board members be assigned to the Curriculum/Policy/Technology/Communications Subcommittee: Liz Barlow, David Peling and Whitney Sanzo (Whitney Sanzo will serve as Chair of the Subcommittee). Ms. Logan requested the following Board members be assigned to the Finance/Personnel/Facilities Subcommittee: Heather Lombardo, Rosemarie Weber and Donna Nolan (Donna Nolan will serve as Chair of the Subcommittee).

II.C. Student Representative Reports

- Katie O'Neill reported all fall sports ended last week and winter sports have been their practices. Boys' basketball will have a scrimmage vs. Tolland at 5:30 p.m. on Friday, December 8th and their first game vs. Ellington next Thursday, December 14th at home at 7:00 p.m.; girls' basketball scrimmaged Simsbury today and their first game is also vs. Ellington next Thursday, December 14th at 5:00 p.m.; Wrestling's first meet is Wednesday, December 20th at Suffield; the first meet for boys' and girls' indoor track is December 14th at Glastonbury at 4:30 p.m.; boys' ice hockey's first game is Wednesday, December 13th vs. the Eastern Connecticut Eagles away at Norwich at 7:30 p.m.; and, the first game for girls' ice hockey was held today against Mercy/Northwest Catholic/East Hampton at 7:00 p.m. and their next game is vs. Hamden Coop on Saturday, December 9th at 4:10 p.m.
- Chase Alexander reported the NHS Volleyball Tournament was held last Friday and 11 teams participated. All proceeds were contributed to scholarships handed out by the GMHS Chapter of the NHS in June. Another volleyball tournament will be held in March.
- PJ Day will be held district-wide on Friday, December 8th. Students can wear their pajamas and bring in a donation of \$1 or more in support of the patients and families at CCMC.
- NHS began its annual stocking drive to help families in need. Students and staff take stockings labeled with specific items and return them to the school to be donated.
- Student Government is currently preparing for a winter-themed spirit day on the week of December 18th to get students excited for winter break.
- Chorus performed a concert this morning at the Women's Senior Breakfast.
- The winter band concert will be held on Thursday, December 14th at 7 p.m. and the winter choral concert on Thursday, December 21st at 7 p.m.

II. Public Comment

There were no public comments this evening.

III. Consent Agenda

III.A. Minutes

A motion was made by Donna Nolan and seconded by Whitney Sanzo that the Granby Board of Education adopt the consent agenda. This motion passed at 7:24 p.m. with two abstentions (Liz Barlow and Heather Lombardo).

IV. Old Business

There was no Old Business to report

V. New Business

V.A. First Reading of District Communications Plan

The Board discussed the draft 2024-2027 District Communications Plan. Ms. Burke stated this plan is presented for a first reading tonight and will be voted on at the next Board Meeting on December 20th. She shared this plan was developed right at the beginning of the school year. Work began with Consultant Patti Renaud and Ms. Burke stated she is very grateful and thankful for her expertise. Focus groups were held with staff, parents and the community and surveys were completed by students, staff, parents, as well as community members. A deeper level of insights was gathered and without this engagement there would not be a plan presented that accurately captures the work done well as areas needing improvement. Ms. Burke stated all of the results can be found on the website as well as recordings of the focus groups. Two-way communication is at the forefront of the plan with the goal of supporting trust and this is a roadmap for the work ahead. It is not a strategic plan. She stated to keep in mind that all items will not be done at the same time and some things may take longer to implement. The essence of this plan is that it is a very short document and there are only two goals:

Goal #1: Provide information that audiences are seeking in an easy-to-find, engaging, concise, and understandable format. Ms. Burke shared a list of some items under this goal, such as, improve website; increase readability of all communications, share school successes; prepare audiences for emergencies; and publicizing important BOE decisions. Ms. Burke stated an Instagram account (@superintendent_burke) has been created to share district and student successes.

Goal #2: Increase opportunities for audiences to express concerns, share suggestions, participate in decision-making, and be a meaningful part of the school community. Under this goal, items of note are to publicize a process for getting concerns address; increase opportunities to address questions; engage parents and community members; and, connect district leaders and superintendent with families and the community. Ms. Burke shared that AskGPS@granbyschools.org was launched. Questions can be emailed and will be answered by Central Office staff. In focus groups, it was learned there is a desire for intergenerational mentors and more volunteer opportunities for parents and the district is already doing this. Donna Nolan inquired if there are any budgetary needs to implement this plan. Ms. Burke stated nothing is currently being identified in the budget and for the remainder of this year, the district will identify what those exact needs are which are very low cost to no cost. She stated there is a need for professional development for administrators to learn skills of communication. Ultimately, she would love to have someone dedicated solely to communication in the district which could probably be a part-time position for a district of Granby's size. Monica Logan inquired about the AskGPS email and if there is an ability to respond directly. Ms. Burke stated the email will be responded to; however, if the question gets posted, it will get posted anonymously. Whitney Sanzo inquired how success will be measured for this plan. Ms. Burke stated initially some communications needs to be streamlined to meet identified goals of the plan. It is intended to replicate the survey and she is working with Patti Renaud with regard to the timing but will look to pose the same questions so success can be measured. This plan will be up for a vote at the next meeting. Ms. Burke requested for the Board to read through the plan and send any questions to Ms. Logan.

VI. Miscellaneous

VI.A. Board Standing Committee Reports

VI.A.1. Curriculum/Policy/Technology/Communication

David Peling stated this subcommittee met this evening and received a Coaching Report from instructional coaches regarding teaching and learning. Also discussed the Assistant Superintendent's Report as follows: Reading waiver; hiring of new high school Department Chair; curriculum revisions; implementation of

Kindergarten age change; DESSA results; threat assessment training; stipends committee meeting; Granby Equity Team meeting; enrichment program for Open Choice; professional development on election day; and collaboration with Avon for K-5 Illustrative Math Program. Also reviewed two state-mandated policies which will go to the full Board for a first reading at the next meeting.

VI.A.2. Finance/Personnel/Facilities

This subcommittee has not met. Approved minutes from the last meeting are in the packet.

VI.B. Other Board-Related Reports

VI.B.1. CREC/CABE

There was nothing new to report for CREC/CABE. A new CREC Council Liaison will be selected soon.

VI.B.2. Granby Education Foundation

Whitney Sanzo stated the GEF will meet next Monday.

V.C. Calendar of Events

This coming Friday is PJ Day which will be celebrated district-wide. Proceeds to go to the Connecticut Children's Medical Center (CCMC).

V.D. Board Member Announcements

Whitney Sanzo stated CCMC will also accept toys on PJ Day and suggested the PTO Book Fair as an opportunity to donate.

V.E. Action Items

- 1) Jennifer Parsons to update the Board at a later date with regard to the reading waiver.
- 2) Send the published list of districts who applied for the reading waiver to the Board.

VII. Adjournment

A motion was made by Donna Nolan and seconded by David Peling that the Granby Board of Education adjourn Board of Education Meeting. This motion passed unanimously at 7:51 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Elizabeth Barlow
Board Secretary